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PORTION OF THE MEMORANDUM

ON

"AFGHANISTAN AS A THEATRE OF WAR"

BY

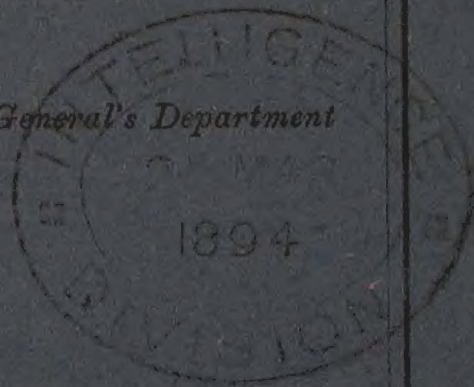
COLONEL SIR O. B. ST. JOHN, K.C.S.I., R.E.,



referring to the

HERAT PROVINCE AND ITS MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

*Prepared in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department
in India: 28th April 1885.*



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SUMMARY.

It is not the town of Herát itself that is the key to India, but the Herát Province, stretching from Farah to Panjdeh, a district exceeding in fertility, as a whole, the rest of Afghanistan, and capable, with a settled Government, of supporting a large army* and furnishing all the munitions of war necessary to it. Farah closes the issue from this avenue to the south, and on this account attention has been drawn to its exceeding importance should the fortress of Herát, blocking its northern entrance, be lost (see Note on Farah, given *ante*).

Herát commands the roads leading through the hilly Hazára country on Kábal and Ghazní as well as the southern road on Kandahár, threatening at the same time Afghánistán's main towns. Although the former roads are easy at present to infantry only and difficult for cavalry, they would not long remain impracticable to guns were Herát in the hands of a military power.

The latest report on the direct Kábal-Herát road is given below:—

[Authority—Captain P. J. Maitland, Assistant Quarter Master General (with Afghan Boundary Commission).]

Herát to Obch; 3 or 4 easy marches; 50 to 55 miles; good roads both banks of river; villages and much cultivation. Supplies fairly abundant.

Obch to Daulatyár; 8 or 9 marches; good roads left bank river; supplies procurable; grass, wood, abundant.

Daulatyár viâ Besud to Gardan-Dewár; 190 miles; road on the whole good; no difficult passes; *said to be practicable for artillery*; water, wood, grass, camel fodder, abundant; certain amount of supplies procurable.

Gardan-Dewár to Kábal; no difficulties.

Tolerable roads connect Daulatyár with Girishk and Maimana.

N.B.—The Amír's post, escorted by cavalry, takes this road.

Herát, therefore, commands Afghánistán, and Afghánistán commanding all the passes leading into India, it has come to be said that Herát is the key to India.

PAGE 7, PARA. 12.

The question of supremacy in the Herát Province has always been one of railways rather than of men, yet India has allowed Communications. herself, in the direction of Western Afghánistán, to be forestalled even in this powerful auxiliary to her military strength, so that at the present moment she cannot apply expeditiously what strength is available to meet a pressing emergency.

* The supplies that could be drawn by an army occupying the Herát Province, without over-taxing its resources when fairly developed, may be thus estimated:—

| <i>Districts.</i> | | | | | | | <i>Men.</i> |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|
| Sabzawár | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10,000 |
| Obch | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6,000 |
| Herát | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 40,000 |
| Ghorián | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10,000 |
| Kushán | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3,000 |
| Karúkh | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3,000 |
| Siáhband | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5,000 |
| Bághis | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5,000 |
| Total | | | | | | ... | 82,000 |
| Adjoining districts of Khorásán and Sístán, &c. | | | | | | ... | 20,000 to 30,000 |

or, in round numbers, 100,000 to 110,000 men.

She has neglected all the essentials necessary to be taken in time of peace to meet foreseen contingencies by the inauguration of lines of communication within her own limits, and the laying in means of prosecuting a campaign beyond them, in a country the physical features and natural resources of which are sufficiently well known to enable calculations to be made with very considerable accuracy.

To operate in Afghánistán railways must follow in the wake of the troops and the transport animals be employed along the intervals intervening between their termini and the army, and in bringing supplies on to the iron roads from all points.

Permanent strategical considerations require that the principal line should be kept as far south as possible, *i.e.*, to the south of the Helmand. Temporary military necessities may impose the extreme northern limit, *i.e.*, the line Kandahár-Farah. This line should not, however, interfere with the construction of the more southern strategical line with branch lines to Kandahár, Farah, and Herát.

PAGE 9.

It is Russia's intention to carry the railway from Askábád direct to Marv and Chaharjui, Burdalik, or other convenient point on the Oxus. This line will render one the forces of Trans-Caspia and Turkistán, and, enveloping Afghánistán on the north, will form a secondary base of operations to the two just mentioned primary bases.

MARK S. BELL, *Lieut.-Colonel*,

Assistant Quarter Master General,

Intelligence Branch.

The 15th May 1885



Notes on that portion of the Memorandum on "Afghanistan as a Theatre of War" by Colonel Sir O. B. St. John, K.C.S.I., R.E., referring to the Herat Province and its Military Capabilities.

PAGE 3, PARA 5.

Sabzawár is important strategically to an army operating from the west or east, offering an excellent site for a *depôt* of supplies. It is the richest district of the Herát Province.

Farah.—Inhabitants 4,000 to 5,000; 160 miles south of Herát, 160 miles west of Girishk. Is a military position of extreme importance, as it commands the Herát-Kandahár road, and the north entrance to Sístán, a district the strategical importance of which cannot be over-rated, abounding in supplies and transport.

Its climate bears a bad reputation; days hot, nights cold, and fever prevalent.

Its revenue (district) = 100,000 rupees. The modern town is a parallelogram, one mile across. It is surrounded by an enormous embankment of earth mixed with chopped straw. A covered way entirely surrounds it. This embankment is from 35' to 40' high; on the top are many towers connected by curtains, and the ramparts have become so hard that a pick will not take effect; a wide and deep ditch, which can be flooded at pleasure, defends the approaches to the embankment. The citadel occupies the north angle of the place.

Doubtless Herát is already lost, and it might be as well to turn attention to Farah, its outpost to the south, and perhaps even more important than it, and to ensure its seizure, as it closes the Herát avenue to the south (see further on).

By covering the exposed walls of Afghán towns by a covered way and glacis, their chief defects, *i.e.*, exposure to being breached and want of grazing fire, are greatly modified.

To render an Afghán walled town safe against a determined escalade, such a covered way with a self flanking trace, of as high a relief as possible, fronted by a glacis, protected by military obstacles, in addition to caponiers to flank the wall or rampart of the main enciente and a flanked ditch with scarp and escarp that cannot be rushed, are essentials.

The mere flanking of the main enciente is insufficient; without such obstacles, covered way and ditch, the storming party would have it all their own way and suffer little once the foot of the main wall was gained.

PAGES 4, 5, 6.

NOTE ON HERÁT AS A BARRIER AND SECONDARY BASE.

Mr. McNeill (British Political Agent, Persia) wrote on the 23rd February 1838:—"The defence which Herát has made is very creditable to its inhabitants; and considering the amount of the means which the Sháh

succeeded in collecting before it (nearly 40,000 men and 80 guns), the want of artillery in the town, the facility with which His Majesty has obtained supplies, &c., &c., I confess the value of Herát has been greatly enhanced in my estimation; and although I have always regarded it as a most important position with reference to the security and tranquillity of India, I was not prepared to look upon it as so strong and defensible a place, or as one so capable of being made a barrier to the advance of any hostile power; and I feel that, if Herát should fall into the hands of any such power, it would be an evil even greater than I believed it would be."

Mr. McNeill declared Herát to be the key of Afghánistán. "The country," he stated, "between the frontiers of Persia and India is far more productive than I had imagined; and there is no impediment, either from the physical features of the country or from the deficiency of supplies, to the march of a *large* army from the frontiers of Georgia to Kandahár, or, as I believe, to the Indus. Count Simonich drove in his carriage from Tehrán to Herát and could drive it to Kandahár, and the Shah's army has now for seven months subsisted almost entirely on the supplies of the country immediately around Herát and Ghorían, leaving the still more productive districts of Sabzawár and Farah untouched. In short, I can state from personal observation that there is absolutely *no impediment* to the march of an army to Herát; and that from the information that I have received the country between that city and Kandahár presents no difficulties, but affords *remarkable* facilities for the passage of armies.

"There is therefore no security for India in the nature of the country through which an enemy would have to pass to invade it from this side (Herát); on the contrary, the whole country is peculiarly favorable for such an enterprise, &c., &c., &c.; it seems to me that it would be a most hazardous policy to allow Persia to act as the pioneer of Russia, &c., &c., &c. I shall therefore urge Lord Auckland, by every argument I can call to mind, to take a decisive course and to save Herát."

HERÁT PROVINCE.

The latest accounts of the Herát Province give the revenue to be 13 lakhs of rupees. Its resources are the most imperfectly developed of the whole of Afghánistán, it having suffered more from misgovernment than any other part of that kingdom.

DISTRICTS.

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Sabzawár. | Kushán. |
| Obeh. | Karúkh. |
| Herát. | Siáhband. |
| Ghorían. | Bághis. |

Sabzawár. Healthy climate; its inhabitants are the finest of the fine Afghán race.

Good supply depôts possible at Sabzawár and Farah. Revenue—1,60,000 rupees. Population—10,000 families (Duránís).

Obeh. Rich cultivation. Population—6,000 families.

Herát. Rich cultivation. Population—20,000 families. Revenue—5,60,000 rupees.

Ghorían. In no way inferior in point of fertility to Herát itself, but just now out of cultivation. Population—8,000 families. Revenue—1,60,000 rupees.

Kushán. Fertile, but out of cultivation.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Karúkh. | Population—3,000 families. Revenue—40,000 rupees (see further on). |
| Siáhband. | Population—8,000 families. Revenue—40,000 rupees (see further on). |
| Bághís. | (See further on.) |

The following extracts, from reports received from the Afghán Boundary Commission,* refer to the cultivation of the outlying districts of the Herát Province, north and north-east of the town of Herát, which have most severely suffered of late years, and which may be supposed to be worse cultivated than the more settled districts to its immediate north and south.

They point to a considerable present cultivation and an abundance of pasture, firewood, and of sheep and goats (and therefore of *ghi*), and to a very considerable prospective supply in the near future.

CHAHÁR AIMÁKH.

The meaning of the word Aimákh is simply *nomad*. It is in common use in Western Afghánistán, where all nomads are known as Aimák.

The words Chahár Aimákh, therefore, simply mean the Four Nomad Tribes:—

| | | |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| 1. Jamshédís. | | 3. Firozkóhis. |
| 2. Suní Hazáras. | | 4. Taimanís. |

NO. 1, JAMSHÉDÍS.

The Jamshédís occupy the central portion of Bághís between the Hazára of Kala Nau on the east and the deserted district of Gulrán on the west.† Kushk is their head-quarters.

The greater part of the country consists of rolling downs, and long ridges separated by hollows, all thickly covered with grass, which, however, is only green in spring and early summer. The height of some of the ridges above the hollows is considerable, 400 or 500 feet, and their slopes are often steep, though smooth and unbroken. This country is entirely destitute of trees and even of bushes, except a little tamarisk in one or two places along the watercourses.

It is, however, well watered by the numerous little reedy streams which descend from the hills, and the soil is light and exceedingly rich. That the country was once thickly populated is shown by the remains of *karezes* and water channels in almost every hollow.

The whole country is cultivable, the dry tops of the ridges bearing crops nearly as good as those of the watered land in the hollows below. Between Kushk and the hills to the south where the country was covered by the Kushk settlements from Turkomán irruption, cultivation is even now extensive. Here fields spread all over the long rounded hills, often covering their steepest slopes up to their very summits.

If the country has peace, there can be no doubt that population and cultivation must increase rapidly.

* Captain P. J. Maitland, Assistant Quarter Master General.

† Gulrán, as noted in the paper on Bághís, is a tract of extreme natural fertility, and has only been abandoned on account of the raids of the Turkománs. No doubt it will shortly be re-peopled. About 250 families of Shigai Firozkóhis have already been permitted to leave their own country in order to settle at Gulrán, and numbers of Herátis are said to be anxious to go there.

There are no nomads (*dudi*) among the Jamshédís, but in spring almost the whole population moves south to the hills with their flocks, returning for the harvest which takes place in June.

Large quantities of wheat and barley are produced, that is, as compared with the population. But the country is naturally very rich, and has, as a rule, sufficient rain and snow to enable crops to be raised without irrigation. Nevertheless, there are occasionally seasons when the winter rains fail and then there is a scarcity.

Melons and lucerne (*rishka*) are grown in the Kushk valley, where there is abundant water, but not much cultivated land. There are hardly any fruit trees, although fruit would no doubt do well, as would also vines. Both orchards and vineyards existed in many places when the country belonged to the Usbaks. Wood is very scarce all over the country west of Kushk; there is great difficulty in getting enough for cooking purposes. Juniper (*juniperus excelsa*) grows on the Band-i-Bábá, and is excellent firewood; but is too far off to be made much use of. It is used for what little building is done. The people of Kushk itself burn pista.

NO. 2, SUNÍ HAZÁRAS OF KALA NAU.

This tribe is located in Bághís, east of the Jamshedí country of which Kushk is the centre.

The low hills of which seven-eighths of the country is composed rise from 100 to 300 or 400 feet above the general level, and may be in places as much as 1,000 feet above the bottoms of the ravines. Their slopes are generally steep and smooth, unbroken by rock or stone, and often perfectly bare of vegetation except the grass which grows on them in spring. This is very generally burnt off in the autumn, when dead and withered, to improve the next year's grazing. The latter is no doubt very good, though not equal to that of the Jamshédís district and Western Bághis.

The quantity of sheep and goats in the country is enormous as compared to the population, but camels are scarce, except, as before mentioned, with the Káká section, who have excellent grazing for them in the Maghor and neighbouring valleys. There *jowassa* (*khar-i-shutar*, or camel-thorn), which always grows on irrigated land left fallow, is found in abundance. The camels resemble those of Afghánistán. There are no Turkistán (Bactrian) camels in this country, though half bred animals are not uncommon. The sheep and goats are mostly black, the former not so good as the brown sheep of the Turkománs.

In the hollows among the little hills is a good deal of cultivation, and in places the steep sides of the latter are tilled to their very summits. This is all Kushkáwa land,* and, as with the rest of Bághís, the rainfall is sufficiently certain and abundant to make the crops nearly as good as those grown on irrigated soil. The latter is confined to the valleys, and there is not very much of it, but the whole tract, though not perhaps possessing the surpassing fertility of western Bághís, is capable of supporting a population very much greater than that which now occupies it. Supplies of grain and *bhusa* may be considered plentiful, having regard to the smallness of the

* Called *daimi*.

population, and sheep are procurable in abundance. In spring and early summer there is plenty of natural grass, and firewood is far more plentiful than in Western Bághís, though there are many places where it is wanting.

Supplies.

The crops are the same as in Bághís generally, namely, wheat and barley, which can be produced in large quantities, with *tíl* and melons as a second crop on irrigated land. Lucerne (*rishka*) is also grown near some of the villages. Cattle are used for ploughing. They are very small and generally black, closely resembling those of Afghánistán. They are used for carrying loads, and also for riding, as no Hazára walks if he can help it.

Crops.

Transport.

Donkeys are also pretty numerous.

No account of the Hazáras, however brief, would be complete without a reference to the *pista* harvest, which plays a part of some importance in the economy of the country.

Pista harvest.

The *pista* tree (*pistacia vera*) grows wild over considerable tracts of Eastern Bághís, as well as in the Firozkóhí country on the Upper Murgháb and on the slopes of the Band-i-Turkistán. But it appears to be most common in the Kala Nau Hazára country, where the sides of the low hills are often covered with it for miles. Such tracts are called *pistálik*s.

The principal *pistálik*s are about Gandao, Babulai, and Torashekh.

The juniper (*juniperus excelsa*) grows in all the higher hills. It is used for building, and also for firewood when sufficiently near at hand, but the Hazáras are mostly dependent for firewood on the *pista*, which has often to be brought from long distances. This and the severity of the winter necessitate a stock of firewood being laid in for the worst months, January and February.

Firewood.

Extracts from "Report on the Herát Valley" by MR. C. L. GRIESBACH, Geological Survey of India, 1884.

The road taken was from Kushk *viâ* Ziárat-i-Bábá, Palezkár Gházegáh, Robát-i-Surkh, Kúruk, Armalek, Gulistán, Chakán, Kala Nau, Nogur, to the banks of the Murgháb, *i.e.*, through the hilly country to the north-east of Herát.

BAND-I-BÁBÁ RANGE.

The aspect of the range is completely changed on this, the southern side of the pass; both the geological formations and the character of the vegetation differ from those on the north side of the Band-i-Bábá. Numerous and large forest trees (firs, &c.) are found scattered over the hill sides. They afford material for firewood for the Herát district, and I saw many men engaged in cutting wood for this purpose.

Firewood.

About six miles before reaching Palezkár, the valley widens and the river forms a considerable alluvium, the greater part of which, along with the low hills bounding it on each side, is well cultivated. Irrigation canals convey water to the higher levels on each side of the valley.

Valley well cultivated.

The lower slopes of the Band-i-Bábá between the Robát-i-Kuhna and Palezkár are well covered by good pasturage for cattle, and at all seasons much frequented by Pathán shepherds. A large party of such was met in the valley below Robát-i-Kuhna.

Good pasturage on lower slopes.

The stream which irrigates the Palezkár valley eventually joins the Kúrúkh stream and belongs to the Hari Rúd system. Palezkár valley. The hills which bound the valley towards the west extend in a south-west direction towards Robát-i-Surkh in the Herát valley, and are extensively irrigated by canals brought from near the head waters of the stream.

On the east and south-east the Palezkár valley is separated from the Kúrúkh valley by low hills, the sides of which are also covered with fields to a large extent, as is also the wide alluvial plain formed by the river itself. Cultivation.

Several villages may be seen on the low hills and plateau dividing the valley from Kúrúkh, but I did not visit them.

During the two mornings I was enabled to draw a large scale profile of the city and immediate neighbourhood, about three feet long. Herát. It includes the north side of the wall, the east side with citadel and Kushk gate, and partly overlooks the city with the inside of the south and west wall. All the principal buildings can be made out in it.

As far as the eye can reach, suburbs and large villages, with orchards, extend over the valley; every inch of it seems well cultivated and irrigated by canals. Rich cultivation.

North of the city, about 1,500 yards from the walls, is the magnificent Masálla, with its four high towers of burnt brick still in very good condition, and the large sarai with a fine dome and round tower, both of them covered with glazed blue tiles.

The Kúh-i-Bábá, north-east of Herát, is skirted, as already mentioned, by low rolling hills which come to within a mile of the city walls. They completely command, not only the four walls, but the citadel and city. Such as Herát now is, it could not hold out against any enemy in possession of these low hills. Hills which command Herát. They can of course be reached without passing Herát very near, by marching, say, from Kubsán, southwards of the city.

In addition to this flanking movement to bring up artillery to the commanding position of Gházegáh, a lightly equipped force or forces might secure it by crossing the Band-i-Bábá, Band-i-Zarmast, and perhaps the Band-i-Ardewán.

But such as Herát is now, its present defences are rendered quite ineffective by the endless villages which extend all over the plain to within a stone's throw of the city walls. An enemy could come up almost unopposed or only meet with such obstacles as garden walls built of mud between him and Herát itself. Herát defenceless at present. In addition to all this, the walls of both the citadel and the city are in a ruinous condition; several of the bastions are cracked the whole way down, and defenceless. The breastworks on the walls are crumbling to pieces and furnished with the usual small loopholes, and in many places, broken down.

There are said to be forty field guns, mostly brass smooth-bores, of various calibres, in the place.

Herát is undoubtedly a position of great strategic importance to Afghanistan, and therefore to India; but its strength lies in the position near Zindaján and the approaches to the passes along the north slope of the Kúh-i-Kaitú and Band-i-Bábá.

The Band-i-Zarmast forms the watershed between the Hari-Rúd drainage and that of the Murgháb. After crossing the pass, the road descends at once along a stream and over boulders. Descent to Gulistán.

and rocks until the Jhagán Robát is reached, which is built near the confluence of a number of streams which have eroded a more or less circular basin. The western margin of this basin is precipitous, and the northern slopes of it rocky, but partly covered with patches of cypress forest. The spurs which run down to the centre from the east, and the low ground near the junction of the streams, are covered with cultivation arranged in terraces far up the hill sides.

The cultivation belongs to the Hazáras of Tangi or Kala Khasak, which is a settlement about two miles below the Robát-i-Jhagán. As far as I could see, fields cover the lower ground of the valley and the slopes of the hills around, far down the stream, and altogether the country seems splendidly adapted to support a numerous population. The high forest-covered hill north-west of the Robát and forming the left side of the valley, about four miles below, is called Piraka, and I am told that a settlement, Kala Piraka, occupies the foot of the mountain pass.

The evening being far advanced, I pitched my camp in the hollow of a valley, covered with fields, which rise in terraces one above the other high up the stream. The cultivation belongs to a village named Gulistán, some three or four miles to the north. A small rivulet irrigates the valley.

The country passed over on this march to Chakán is, without exception, the finest I have seen in this part of the world, and reminds me forcibly of the best open valleys of the Himalayas. The rocky north slopes of the Band-i-Zarmast, the Top-chak hills to the east, and as far as the eye can reach in that direction, are covered with dense forests of pines, cypress, and a pine with long needles which the natives call *chír*. The forests extend even down to, and partly over, the plateau, and scantier forests of cypress cover the farther elevations above Chakán.

All the lower ground irrigated by the numerous springs and streams flowing northward is well cultivated in terraces, whilst also vast patches of ground on the splendid plateau are converted into fields.

From the height of the Zarmast, the country is spread out like a map below one's feet, and far away to the west, north, and east nothing is seen but patches of fields covering what appears from above an enormous plain. Villages are not seen, because they are all low down in the ravines, close to the watercourses.

Dehistán is one of the Hazára settlements east of Gulistán, and to it belongs the vast cultivations which spread over the basin-like depression, and the plateau south of Naratú and north-east of Kúh-i-Zarmast.

The road is very good the whole way. To reach the top of the plateau above Chakán one has to ascend one of the side streams running into the Chakán ravine, which is the most difficult part of the road, but quite easy for laden animals.

The rest is entirely easy, partly along streams, partly over plateaux, till the valley of Kala Nau is reached. Cultivation is seen along the whole course wherever the river courses form alluvial plains, and even on the rounded slopes of the hills are fields depending on atmospheric irrigation.

Deputy Assistant Commissary General Rind writes from Gulrán, 30th March 1885 :—

“ With the Amír and country with us our troops should have no difficulties about supplies (on road Kandahár-Herát). A few days’ supplies should be carried with the force (native supplies as also a little grain), and the country depended upon for the daily supplies, the supply carried being kept as a reserve; the Amír’s officials could lay down at every stage all required, and could also help with carriage.

“ If we could rely upon having Herát and Mashhad to draw upon, one would require to bring very little from India : even liquor can be got, though I don’t know that it would be very good. Warm clothing, such as shirts, socks, and gloves, should be got from England, and for coats and trowsers Afghánistán should be indented on for *barak*, which is better than anything that can be got in India. For horse clothing the felts of the country should be used.

“ A month hence all along this side of the Paropamisus grass covers the whole country; firewood, I fancy, will be the great difficulty, but can, I believe, be got from the hill where *pistacia* grows.” (*See ante.*)

Extracts from the Reports of Newspaper Correspondents with the Afghan Boundary Commission.

DISPUTED BOUNDARY REGION.

“ The country is not in the least like what we expected. The valleys, and a great deal of the hill country too, are marvelously fertile * * * *
 * . Once at Panjleh she (Russia) could dominate the Kushk valley, whence unlimited forage could be drawn for a large army, as the low rolling hills and undulations are covered with grass in the summer. * * * *
 * * * * * . Bághís, which extends eastwards to the Házara country at Kala Nau, is a country of rolling downs, long ridges, and undulations stretching away to the desert south of Merv. It is covered with luxuriant grass in spring and summer, and the soil is marvelously fertile, grain crops growing in the hollows and even on the ridges without irrigation. It was once densely populated, but has long been nearly deserted owing to the Turkomán raids. It is rapidly being repopulated by Fírozkhí colonists from the Upper Murgháb, sent by order of the Amír, and the Herátis themselves are anxious to settle in it. It is this rich country, only awaiting repopulation, which Russia claims. The best efforts of our Boundary Commissioner and of the English Foreign Office will be needed to save it from being annexed by the Czar’s officers, and we hope public opinion both in this country and at home will be so strongly excited that the claim so coolly made by M. Lessar and now rejected by Earl Granville will never be admitted.”

Mr. Kaye’s remarks on the situation of Herát agree with Mr. McNeill’s estimate of its value, given on pages 1 and 2. He also writes :—“ All the materials* necessary for the organization of a large army and the formation of its depôts are to be found in the neighbourhood of Herát. * *

* Upon the possession of such a country would depend, in no small measure, the success of operations undertaken for the invasion or the defence of Hindustán.”

* Lead, iron, sulphur, saltpetre; willows and poplars (best trees for charcoal); supplies of grain, fodder, sheep, &c.; from the population might be drawn hardy and docile soldiers.